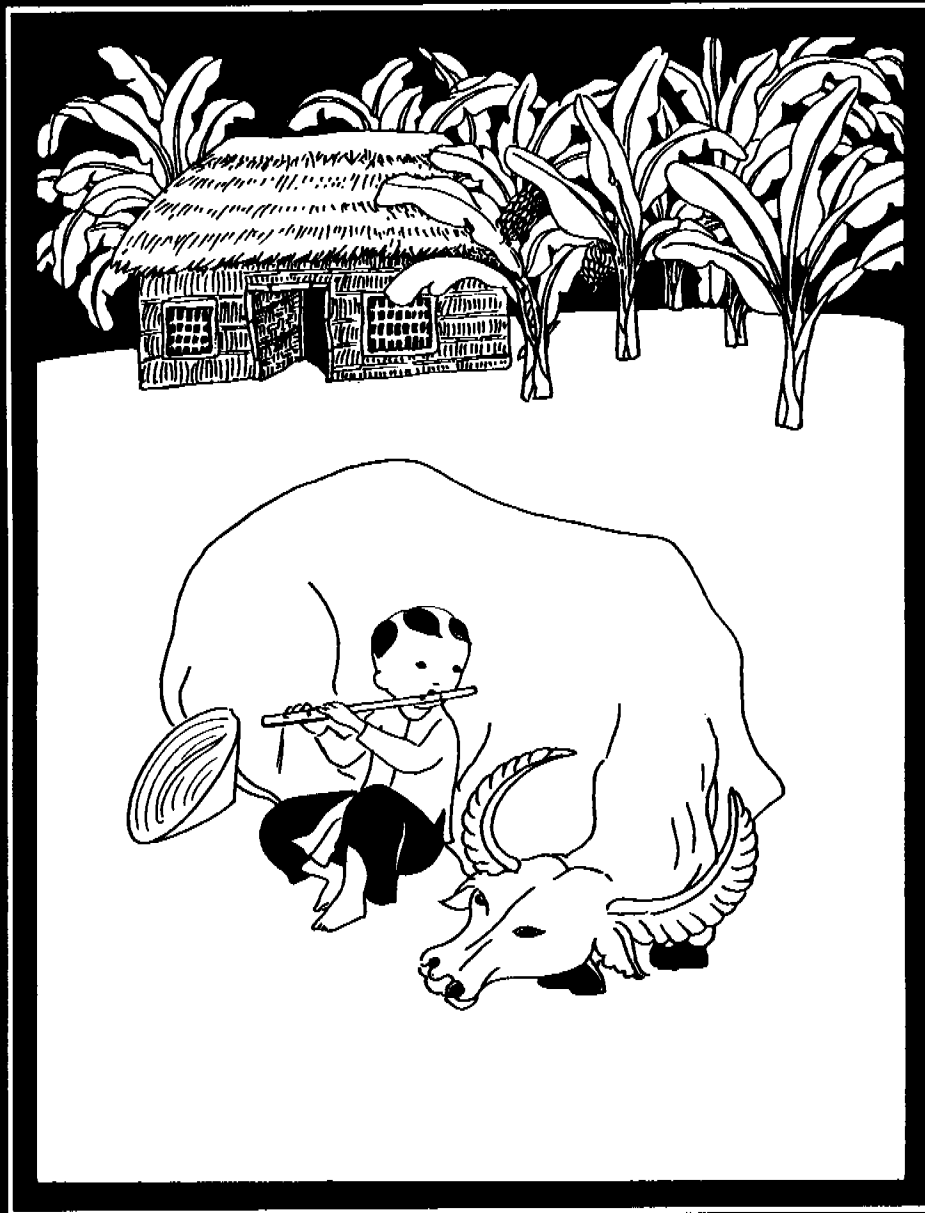


From Rice Paddies and Temple Yards: Traditional Music of Vietnam



*Phong Thuyet Nguyen
Patricia Shehan Campbell*

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World Music Press

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by
**Phong Thuyet Nguyen
Patricia Shehan Campbell**

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About the Authors

Phong Thuyet Nguyen, Ph.D.

was raised in Can Tho province in the Mekong delta of South Vietnam, in a village called Tam Ngai. He was born into a musical family that played art music, music for festivals, rituals, ceremonies, Buddhist chant, chamber music and theatrical music. At the age of five, he began his musical training with his father, concentrating first on singing and progressing to instrumental instruction at age 10. His formal teacher for many years was a well-known music master in South Vietnam, Mr. Tram Van Kien (Muoi Kien), who taught him vocal and instrumental chamber, ritual and theater music, and Buddhist chant. Even as a child Dr. Nguyen performed in many provinces of South Vietnam as a singer and instrumentalist. Over the years he concentrated particularly on the *đàn tranh* zither, *đàn nguyệt* lute, and *đàn bầu* monochord. When he was ten he moved to a town called Tra On, and several years later resettled in Saigon, where he studied Western music, earned a degree in literature and philosophy from the University of Saigon and taught high school literature and private music students. He was appointed principal of the high school and from 1970-74 introduced and taught classes in Vietnamese traditional music, not previously taught in schools, and only recently offered for credit. He left Saigon in 1974.



Dr. Nguyen earned his Ph. D. in Ethnomusicology at the Sorbonne University in Paris, France, and served the National Center for Scientific Research through the mid-1980s. His research centered around various aspects of Vietnamese music, including traditional song, modal systems, and the mixture of Western and Vietnamese elements in the music of contemporary Vietnam and Vietnamese-American communities. He is now considered to be one of the two recognized exponents of Vietnamese music on the international scene. A well-known and widely respected teacher and scholar, he has trained a number of students (some of who have gone on to teach traditional Vietnamese music in Vietnam), performed on numerous recordings on the Lyrichord and other labels, directed and participated in international concerts in Asia, Europe and America, and has further contributed to the field of Ethnomusicology through his books and articles. He has been the recipient of a number of grants by the United States and French governments to aid in the collection and preservation of Vietnamese musics. Dr. Nguyen is currently on the faculty of Kent State University in Ohio.



Patricia Shehan Campbell, Ph.D.

is associate professor of music education at the University of Washington. She received her Ph. D. in music education with a concentration in ethnomusicology from Kent State University, where she studied South Indian mridangam and Karnatic vocal techniques with Ramnad V. Raghavan, played in the Thai Ensemble and studied Laotian *kaen* with Terry Miller and Jaretnchai Chonpairot. Her interest in world music has taken her as student, researcher, and clinician to Bulgaria, Hungary, Japan, India and Australia. Dr. Campbell has served on the faculties of Washington University in St. Louis and Butler University in Indianapolis, where she was chair of the department of music education. While in St. Louis, she took part in an NEA-funded project resulting in *Silk Sarongs and City Streets*, a study of Laotian resettlement in the U.S. She is a consultant on music in early and middle childhood, multicultural music education, and the use of movement as a pedagogical tool. A prolific writer, she has published articles on the issues of crosscultural music learning, music preference, and methods for children in numerous journals. She is author of *Sounds of the World: Music of Southeast Asia*, and with Sam-Ang Sam, *Silent Temples, Songful Hearts: Traditional Music of*

Cambodia, and co-editor of *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education* (with William M. Anderson). She is an active member of the Music Educators National Conference, Society for Ethnomusicology, College Music Society, International Society for Music Education, Organization of Kodaly Educators, and the Dalcroze Society.

Foreword

During the past ten years we have witnessed an increasingly serious courtship between the formerly discrete fields of music education and ethnomusicology. Practitioners of music education — especially classroom teachers — have developed a heightened curiosity about musical traditions beyond those traditionally taught and at the same time recognized the increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds of their students. The practical limitations of time and place have prevented most teachers from conducting their own primary research into these “non-Western” traditions, as diverse as African, East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American. At the same time, practitioners of ethnomusicology have become aware of the need to transmit their findings to a constituency broader than fellow scholars.

The ideal solution has been to bring together someone having expertise in a specific musical tradition with someone having expertise in methodology (and not a little knowledge of the specific tradition as well). *From Rice Paddies and Temple Yards: Traditional Music of Vietnam* will surely serve as a model for further publications in a field some call “applied ethnomusicology.”

Dr. Phong Nguyen is the ultimate “insider,” trained in the tradition from childhood and one of the world’s greatest exponents of traditional Vietnamese music. His training in scholarship at the Sorbonne has also made him an articulate spokesman for this little-known but exquisite tradition. In this work Dr. Patricia Shehan Campbell combines her expertise in music education methodology, her experience in the classroom, and her enthusiasm for Vietnamese music with Dr. Nguyen’s profound knowledge to offer teachers at various levels practical material for the teaching of Vietnamese music. This work is representative of an important new trend in the way music is taught in the United States.

This work appears at an auspicious moment in history, as a new world order emerges after the long and dark years of the “cold war.” The unthinkable dream becomes reality, almost on a daily basis. Vietnam has been a part of America’s recent past but not the one that most wish to remember and celebrate. For Vietnamese-Americans, time has begun to heal the trauma which brought them to America, and as they have become established members of American society, they can allow themselves to remember again their Vietnamese culture as a positive attribute. As such, an interest in teaching the music of a people who have until now symbolized to us more agony than ecstasy is surely a step in the healing process.

Terry E. Miller

Professor of Ethnomusicology
Center for the Study of World Musics
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

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Pronunciation Guide

Vietnamese:

Corresponding Common English Pronunciation:

Vowels:

a	ah (like “r”)
ã	ah (with rising-up)
â	er (with rising-up)
e	air
ê	ay (like “day”)
i	ee
o	or
ô	oh
ơ	er
u	oo (like “too”)
ư	ew (like “new”)
y	ee

(Note: Pronunciation is also affected by marks over vowels indicating gliding tones. These are explained in Chapter 2, page 27.)

Consonants:

	<i>(North)</i>	<i>(Central & South)</i>
b	b	b
c	k	k
ch	ts (strong)	ts (weak)
d	z	y
đ	d	d
gi	zee	yi
ho	hor	hw
k	k	k
l	l	l
m	m	m
n	n	n (prefix), ng (ending)
nh	nya	nya
ph	f	f
qu	kw	w
r	z	r
s	s	sh
t	t (weak)	t (weak)
th	th (strong)	th (strong)
v	v	b(ee) or y (like “yes”)
x	s	s

Preface

This book-and-tape set represents the first complete resource for the introduction of Vietnamese traditional music and culture in the English language. The book unfolds in several sections. The first part consists of a thumbnail sketch of the Vietnamese people, their land, their history, and their customs, including music, so that the reader may become familiar with this people whose joys and sorrows are expressed in their songs and instrumental music. The second section presents an introduction to Vietnamese language, a description of Vietnamese traditional musical forms and instruments, and an account of changing traditions in Vietnamese-American communities within the United States. A series of twelve lessons comprise the third section, designed for the teaching of Vietnamese music, and Vietnamese culture through music. The progression of experiences suggested in each lesson will enable young people and adults, Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese, to understand the beauty and logic of Vietnamese musical traditions.

The accompanying tape provides examples of several important musical genres, including children's songs, folk songs that blend language and literature with music in their image-laden poetic verse, instrumental solo and ensemble works, and poetry that is more music than it is speech in its elaborate recitation. While the book offers an intellectual understanding of Vietnamese traditions, the heart of the culture is found in the music. The performers are all Vietnamese refugees living in the United States. Some are professional musicians, some enjoy making music in their leisure time. All sing and play in a manner that clearly reveals both the beauty inherent in this tradition and their reverence and love for it. We are deeply grateful to them for joining with us on this project. We suggest that you listen to the tape first, without explanation, and absorb the sound, texture and mood of the music. Allow the book to enhance and guide you to further understanding *after* you have been exposed to the music. The nuances of pronunciation, gliding tones and microtones, so hard to notate accurately, will become far clearer and well within reach through aural learning.

We feel this project was inevitable. Vietnamese people, many of them refugees resettled in California, Washington and Texas, and in smaller communities such as those in Ohio, Wyoming, Massachusetts and Connecticut, are looking for a guide to help retain and transmit traditional Vietnamese music and culture to Vietnamese children in community centers and Saturday morning schools. Likewise, teachers of music, the arts, history and social studies in elementary and secondary schools desperately need a resource that reveals the beauty and vitality of the music and culture of some of the newest members of their classrooms. All too often Vietnamese people have been viewed entirely through the harsh and distorted filter of the war experience. It is rare that the fundamental gentleness of the Vietnamese character is explored. People of all ages living side by side in communities of ethnic diversity need accurate information, free of stereotypes and misconceptions, to help them celebrate that diversity, rather than be suspicious of it. We both share a sense of zeal for bringing understanding of and appreciation for Vietnamese music and culture, and music *in* culture to interested students on all levels. It is our hope that *From Rice Paddies and Temple Yards: Traditional Music of Vietnam* will refresh and enrich all of our readers and listeners.

1 *"Crack your whip while roars the autumn wind"*
*Historical and Cultural
Background*



Vietnam

and Neighboring Countries in Southeast Asia

